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# RECOGNIZING and THANKING 4-H LEADERS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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Recognizing and thanking men and women who have contributed their time, energy, and thought to the 4-H program is not only important to maintaining a corps of highly qualified, dedicated 4-H leaders, but is the courteous thing for you to do.

Where do you start and what do you do?

## RECOGNIZING LEADER VALUE

We feel that the highest form of recognition a person can receive is to be asked to assume an important leadership job and then be allowed to perform this function. This certainly is true of adult 4-H leaders. Make sure the 4-H leader's role is an important one in the extension program. Then place people in positions that will use all their talents and challenge their abilities. Give and clarify guidelines and help develop skills and understanding. Then release leaders to use imagination and ingenuity as they work with boys and girls.

Give the 4-H leaders status by paying attention to them and their needs. In your work year, do you feel that you give enough of your time to leader recruitment, teaching, and recognition in proportion to your other activities?

Help the community realize the value of dedicated 4-H leaders. A person who receives the thanks and appreciation of the boys and girls, their parents, his friends and neighbors, is bound to know that what he is doing is important and worthwhile.

The aim of a plan for leader recognition is to show leaders that the Extension Service and the community value them and their efforts.

## WAYS TO RECOGNIZE LEADERS

### Leader Recognition Dinner

One method used to thank 4-H leaders is the dinner. Usually this is a once-a-year, very special affair. Often husbands and wives are also invited. Held at a time of year when leaders can rededicate themselves and have their spirits lifted, the dinner can give the entire 4-H program a push ahead.

A few words of caution. Make the dinner special. This can be done in many ways, from holding it some place other than the usual one to using unique decorations and programs. Honor leaders at the meeting.



- List leaders' names on the printed program.
- Seat leaders at the head table.
- Arrange for 4-H members, 4-H alumni, and community leaders to be among those thanking the 4-H leaders.
- When presentations are made make sure the leaders' names are pronounced correctly and the names of persons not present removed from the list.
- Arrange to have a few personal references and anecdotes used.

A leader recognition dinner should really recognize leaders as people if it is to be successful.

## **Pins, Certificates, and Other Awards**

Recognition such as pins or certificates has a place when used with care. These can be used to mark special points of leadership tenure such as the first year, fifth year, tenth year, and so on. Outstanding progress in certain areas such as safety, health, community service, can be recognized by presenting clubs and leaders with certificates or plaques. A corsage presented to each woman leader at a banquet or a special corsage for the president of the leaders' council may work out nicely. Be sure to recognize all leaders without paying too much attention to one individual.

## **News, Articles, Feature Stories, Pictures**

Mention local 4-H leaders in newspapers when giving publicity to clubs or members. Occasionally you will have an opportunity to see that a full length feature about an especially effective leader is used in a newspaper. Such a feature is particularly desirable when built around the growth of young people and community improvement. Pictures of leaders with club members they are helping are always appropriate. Often the leader is working so hard helping club members publicize the 4-H Club, he or she is never mentioned unless someone from the outside helps.

## Other Means of Recognition

There are many additional ways you can recognize leaders if you are alert. Use a leader's knowledge in a different way such as having him appear on a radio or TV show; take part as an instructor or demonstrator in community, area, or county meetings; or accompany members on out-of-county trips.

You can also give recognition by featuring leaders and leadership in exhibits; giving praise to leaders at meetings in the community; or writing a personal letter to a leader citing some club feature or member progress with which he or she assisted. These are but a few of the many ways you can recognize and thank 4-H leaders.

It is important that the recognition is sincere. Tying recognition and thanking to evaluation of a leader's performance can lead to greater growth in the individual and the program.

Additional help is available from your land-grant college and State 4-H office.

## Useful USDA leaflets:

- PA-359 *Help 4-H Local Leaders*
- PA-395 *Let's Strengthen Our Local Leader Training*
- PA-428 *Making News Stories Work for You*
- PA-460 *Develop Leaders in 4-H—Several Kinds*
- PA-484 *Making Personal Columns Work for You*
- PA-505 *Is This a Meeting of the Bored?*
- PA-511 *Select the 4-H Leader for the Job*

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**Issued September 1962**

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1962—O-645265